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WILLIAM PEPPERRELL

1647-1734

Family

COL. WILLIAM PEPPERRELL.

First of the family in America.

From the original portrait
in the possession of Mrs. George E. Belknap of Brookline, Mass.

WILLIAM PEPPERRELL

1647-1734

ADDRESS

AT

THE FIFTH ANNUAL REUNION

OF

THE PEPPERRELL ASSOCIATION

KITTERY POINT, MAINE

AUGUST 15, 1901

BY

WILLIAM SALTER

1676468

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WILLIAM PEPPERRELL

1647–1734

Biography and History are the memories of mankind. Individuals and communities, things personal and things social, make up the world. And every where the personal precedes the social: the individual antedates the community. Some man of weight and substance becomes paterfamilias to after generations. "Give us men;" "Give us a high-minded man," is the imploring cry of civilization.

Abraham is still "father of the faithful." Moses and David gave life at different periods to the people of Israel. Pericles and Aristides, Socrates and Plato made Athens an immortal memory. A thousand years ago Alfred the Great died (901 A. D.). He was the first ruler in the long years of Christian history to "live worthily," to devote his reign to the improvement and welfare of his people. And now the historian traces to his genius and example what has been noble in England for the ten centuries since his day. It was the work John Fiske had in mind to do, when strick n down in this summer's remorseless heat. Out of the chaos of the eighteenth century the virtue and magnanimity of Washington created the United States of America. His character made him the political Messiah of our country and of the world. In his example the nations see to-day the harbinger of a better civilization.

The discoverers of America made one part of it New Spain; another part, New France; another part, New England. They determined the future of each different portion of the continent. Spain still lives in Mexico, in Florida, in New Mexico, and in South America. The impress of France remains upon the St. Lawrence, at the mouth of the Mississippi, in the city of St. Louis, and among the Half-Breeds of the Northwest. Sir Walter Raleigh, Captain John Smith, the One Hundred Souls upon the Mayflower, Lord Baltimore, Wm. Penn, Oglethorpe, the Huguenots, the Scotch-Irish, survive in the shape they gave to American society.

In 1614 the most daring English adventurer appeared upon these immediate waters. Not losing heart from the perils that befell him in Virginia, Captain John Smith prosecuted other voyages with indomitable resolution. He went up and down this coast in the summer of 1614. With the skill of a modern coast-survey party, he made the Isle of Shoals the base of his observations for the long reach of the coast from Cape Cod to the Penobscot, of which he prepared a map. He says: "I planted a garden upon the top of a rocky isle in May that grew so well as it served for sallads in June and July." He took the map he prepared to England, and published it with a glowing account of the country, which he named New England, and he was honored as the "Admiral of New England." Foremost among his friends and supporters were the "Merchant Adventurers" of London and Plymouth. Ardently devoted to the settlement of this region by his countrymen, he represented it as "a most excellent place for health and fertility." He said: "Of all the four parts of the world I have seen not inhabited, could I have means to transport a colony, I would rather live here than anywhere," and referring to the zeal and success of the Spaniards, the French, and the Portuguese in their colonies, he plead with his countrymen for "the planting of these north parts of America." In this interest he visited the west of England, and distributed

copies of his book on New England among the mariners and fishermen of Devonshire, Cornwall, and South Wales. It was from those districts that the larger portion of the early colonists of this immediate region came.

The fish industry then as now added largely to the commerce and wealth of the world. In these waters Captain Smith saw an inviting field for this industry. The cod were larger and of finer quality than those on the banks of Newfoundland; and the dry air of the Shoals was favorable for curing them. Said Captain Smith, "In March, April, May, and half-June, here is cod in abundance. The savages compare the store in the sea with the hairs upon their head. He is a bad fisher that cannot kill in one day with hook and line one, two, or three hundred. Is it not pretty sport to pull up two pence, six pence, and twelve pence, as fast as you can hale and veare a line. And what doth yield a more pleasing content than angling with a hook, and crossing the sweet Ayre from Ile to Ile over the silent streams of a calm sea?" Here also were all manner of other fish:

> "The king of waters, the sea-shouldering Whale,
> The snuffling Grampus with the oily scale,
> The Porpoise, consorting Herrings, the bony Shad,
> Mackerel with rainbow colors richly clad,"

as told by an old chronicler.

And so it came about that many adventurous spirits were attracted to these waters and to this coast, year after year, in the seventeenth century, from the first settlement at Odiorne's Point in 1623, until, in every reach of the Piscataqua, in all its tortuous windings and recesses, and upon lands adjacent, the woodman's axe and the farmer's plow, the spade and the hoe, took the place of the war-whoop and the scalping-knife, and ship-building and navigation and commerce and trade and the arts of domestic life transformed the wilderness into homes of industry and civilization.

At that period the Mother country was in religious and political ferment. Imperialism and Liberty were at odds. Charles I. and Oliver Cromwell were representatives of the

conflict. Some of each side took part in the colonization of America, but in the main the spirit of freedom was in the ascendant among those who planted the germs and laid the foundations of American institutions. So it was hereabouts. In the year that Cromwell entered upon his sphere of influence in the Long Parliament (1641), there already existed on these immediate waters four little republics, Portsmouth, Dover, Exeter, Pascataqua, the latter name standing for Kittery.

When the strife of that century ceased with the accession of William and Mary, nowhere was that Revolution welcomed with more cheer than in the American colonies. The fort that stood guardian of this harbor on the other side of the river, opposite to "Pepperrell's Fort" on this side, was given the name of William and Mary, as that name was also given to the first college in Virginia. The American Revolution of 1776 was the logical outcome of the English Revolution of 1688, and, as was shown by a chief scholar* in the science of political history, of the Pepperrell stock, at our last Reunion, the reaction of the American Revolution upon the progress of liberal sentiment in England and in the world at large has been great and beneficent, especially with reference to religious freedom, home rule or local self-government, representative government, public education, and freedom of commercial intercourse.

But however interesting and instructive these reflections, it is more pertinent to the occasion that we bring before us, though it must be in imperfect outline, some clear and authentic conception of the man whom we honor as our common progenitor.

"A PENNILESS FISHERMAN BECAME A GREAT SHIPOWNER AND MERCHANT,"

is the simple record of our ancestor in the forty-fourth volume of Sidney Lee's National Biography, London, 1895.

*The Hon. Everett Pepperrell Wheeler, of New York.

MRS. MARGERY (BRAY) PEPPERRELL,

Wife of Col. William Pepperrell.

From the original portrait
in the possession of Mrs George E. Belknap of Brookline, Mass.

Upon the discovery of America no portion of the English people were more aroused to the importance of that discovery than those in the west of England. The Merchant Adventurers of Bristol and Plymouth vied with those of London in fitting out vessels for further discovery and for commerce and trade. It soon appeared that great wealth was hidden in the waters and upon the coasts of the new world. The fishing industry received powerful stimulus. It aroused adventure. It called for skill and daring. It employed labor. It created and fostered those hardy virtues which made the mariners of England famous in story and in song.

Of that class was William Pepperrell. He was of a family of that name in the county of Cornwall, near the Devonshire line. He was born in 1647. In youth an apprentice on a fishing vessel, he early acquired the arts of navigation and of fishing, and became master of his own vessel on the banks of Newfoundland and on these waters. Diligence brought him gain, and he used his earnings to enlarge his business, employing others in his service. Thus he grew to favor and to fortune, and, after some years at the Shoals* he removed to this place, meanwhile winning the confidence of a substantial citizen here and the heart and hand of that citizen's gracious daughter, Margery Bray.

And so, 221 years ago this summer, began that happy union of love and affection from which has sprung this miracle of time, whereof we are partakers, as we gather from near and far at their ancient home to enliven in our hearts the fires of ancestral piety and nourish in our bosoms devout gratitude to the benignant Providence that has brought about our appearance in the world from so worthy a stock.

That happy home continued for more than half a century, 1680-1734, blessed with a larger measure of felicity than commonly falls to the human lot. The two sons and six daughters which came to them in the course of twenty years, had each families of their own, and their children and

*The Maine Historical Society on the 17th of August, 1901, placed a bronze tablet on the cellar wall of what was William Pepperrell's house on Appledore Island at the Isles of Shoals.

children's children, if not now as many as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is upon the seashore, may yet become so in times afar. The marrying and being given in marriage, which remains the charm of human life to the end of time, began with those children 199 years ago, September 4th, 1702, when the eldest daughter Mary, and John Frost, of Newcastle, plighted their troth*. Later, the other daughters joined their hands: Margery to Peletiah Whittemore, and to Elihu Gunnison her second husband; Joanna to George Jackson, M. D.; Miriam to Andrew Tyler; Dorothy to John Watkins, and Joseph Newmarch her second husband; Jane to Benjamin Clark, and William Tyler her second husband. The two sons Andrew and William were also married and had children, so that in old age the venerable parents enjoyed the gladness of seeing their children (except Andrew who had deceased) and children's children rise up and bless them.

William Pepperrell's life was prolonged to eighty-seven years. Throughout the whole of it his business expanded in all the commerce and trade of the time. He collected in warehouses the wealth of the seas, and beaver-skins and furs and timber from the forests. He sent his vessels to the fishing-grounds, to England, to the West Indies, to the Mediterranean, and to the Southern Colonies. In that spirit of reciprocity which belongs to commerce, which marks the true merchant, he exchanged the commodities of this region with those of other lands. In addition to these varied cares and manifold concerns, he was also employed in public affairs, both in military services as captain of militia and lieutenant colonel during the long period of the French and Indian wars, known in the colonies as "King William's war" and "Queen Anne's war," and in the administration of justice, holding for 35 years consecutively the office of Justice of the Peace, and when nearly 70 years of age appointed one of the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas, enjoying in every situation the respect and con-

*The speaker's well-remembered grandmother, Jane Frost Salter (1757-1837), was daughter of Joseph (1717-1768), ninth child of John and Mary Pepperrell Frost.

fidence of the people. In 1696 he was representative to the General Court of Massachusetts, to which Maine had been attached by royal charter.

Warm family affection and close concert of action characterized the whole Pepperrell household. The eldest son Andrew was taken into partnership by his father, and the business was carried on under the name of "William Peppenell and Son," until Andrew's death, when the second son William took Andrew's place, and the business went on under the name of "William Pepperrells."

The son William inherited the industry and enterprise, the strength of character and the probity and public spirit of his father, and upon those foundations amassed larger wealth, and came to high fame. A man of tact, of quick perception, of sound common sense, of Christian principles, of engaging manners, of elegant address, the delight of his friends, the life of every company, the soul of honor; in business, when promising a payment, never failing as to time or sum; leaving home and a prosperous business at the call of his country, braving the perils of an ice-bound coast and a hazardous undertaking, followed by four thousand farmers, mechanics and fishermen, who were impelled by no force-levy or press-gang, but voluntarily endured the hardships of a seven weeks' siege, their commander preserving equanimity, cheerfulness, and confidence in every scene, winning victory by skill and prowess; his heroism and their zeal and valor became familiar tales in every colonial household, and won admiration and honor in the Mother country.

As "the glory of children is their father's," filial virtue traces a share of the honor and renown of Sir William Pepperrell to the loving care, the prudential counsels, the good example of his father, and no less to his gracious mother.

A tribute to that mother at the time of her death, 160 years ago, April, 1741, says in words worthy the remembrance of her descendants to the latest generation:

"Madam Margery Pepperrell was born at Plymouth in Old England, came hither in infancy with her parents, who left their country for the free enjoyment of their religious principles.

"She was through the whole course of her life very exemplary for unaffected piety and amiable virtues, especially her charity, her courteous affability, her prudence, meekness, patience, and unweariedness in well-doing. As it pleased God to afford her worldly advantages and a large capacity for doing good, so she improved them to the honor of God and the service of her generation; being charitable without ostentation, and making it her rule to do good as she had opportunity. She was not only a loving wife and tender parent, but a sincere friend to all her acquaintance. She was justly esteemed while living, and at death as much regretted. As she lived a life of faith and constant obedience to the gospel, so she died with great inward peace and comfort and the most cheerful resignation to the will of God.

"The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever."

Wm. Peppenell and his wife were among the founders and chief pillars of the church in Kittery. The loving cup, of solid silver, he gave to the church the year before his death, still perpetuates in sacramental service the communion of saints in the divine love. He made religion an honor and praise among the people, and in his day and in the days of Sir William the observance of the Sabbath and attendance upon public worship were the common rule. The pastor of the church was a scholar, a graduate of Harvard, and he was employed in the education of the Pepperrell children.

The six daughters were trained in the domestic arts, and, equally with the two sons, in habits of industry and economy, so that all were qualified to look out for themselves, to attend to their own concerns, and make ventures in business on their own account. They were characterized by that spirit of independence and self-respect which the Pepperrell mottoes upon the old family crest tersely express:

'Peperi."
'Fortiter et fideliter."
"Virtute parta tuemini."

"I have gained it."
"Bravely and faithfully."
"What we have gained we defend by virtue and valor."

In conclusion, you may suffer me to recall the fact that at the Re-union two years ago a few papers were exhibited, worn and punctured by the tooth of time, that had escaped the obliteration and oblivion that has befallen the accounts and correspondence which in his day William Pepperrell kept with scrupulous care. Some had come from the garret of an old house in Portsmouth; others had been picked from a refuse of such things that a young man of antiquarian spirit had exploited fifty years ago about the premises of the Pepperrell mansion. "Old Mortality" seemed to live again as from the one source and from the other came a striking coincidence and a confirmation of fact in our ancestor's conduct of business. From one source, from the garret, came a copy of a letter which he had sent to his correspondent in England, the copy in his own handwriting under his signature, that showed his considerate care for the mother of a young man who had lost his life while in his service. From the other source, from the refuse barrel, came a letter from that English correspondent in reply to the letter of William Pepperrell. The following extracts from the two letters afford a unique and vivid view of our ancestor, and show how upright and prudential he was in conduct, and how things were going on in those times:

Piscataqua, Aug'st 25, 1725.

To Mr. Roger Prowse.

There was a young man that was born in your part that served his time with me, call'd John Kitto. His mother is a wid'w woman in the city of Exon, call'd Mary Kitto.

Now my request to you that you will be pleased to inform the poor woman that her son was mate of a vessel of ours at North Carolina, and being up one of the rivers with goods a-trading oversot a large cannew and was drownd and every thing that was with him. Sum of his things was brought home and sold for the most we could geet, and he had sum wages due all amounted too this country money £21 " 1 " 6 which makes £7 " 11 " 6 sterl which we desire you to pay to his mother and take her receipt for ye same and send us because shall want to show

that we have paid what we had of his to sum that would willing a kept it. There was likewise one Gitto drowrd i i our employ & am informed that his mother's name is Grace Gitto who lived at Mainehead neare Bristol—if she is living order her thirty shillings on our acc't. Excuse our giving you this trouble. We are with much respts

your most Humble servtts
Wm Pepperrells .

Exon 8 Feb. 1726-7.

To Messrs. Will Pepperrells.

As for the two poor widows I have found them out and have paid Grace Gitto 30s and this week after long inquiry I have found out Mary Kitto to whom shall pay £7 " 11 " 6 sterling both which receipts you shall have by the ship I send your goods by. I have examined your acct & think every article right. I am

R. P.
(Roger Prowse)

With three more letters, two of earlier date from the refuse barrel, the other of later date from the garret, I finish my duty at this time.

Pascataqua, May 1, 1712.

Mr. Vennard

You being now master of the sloupe Mirram now riding in the harbor of Pascataqua, bound to Antego my order for you is to imbrace the first fair wind God shall send & saile directly for Antego & being there arrived for you to address yourself to M Antony Mountero & deleavor my goods &c & make what disposition you can. Keep a good Luckout at sea—trust no culleres except convoys &c.

Not doubting of your prudent care & management of all your affairs but wishing you a prosperous voyage and a safe return which is the prayer of your friend.

Wm. Pepperrell.

The copy of this I. received which by God's assistance I intend to follow.

May 3, 1712 John Vennard.

Kittery March 21, 1716-7.

Son Whittemore

These serves to acquaint you that we are all here in good health & hope you all enjoy like favor. I desire to assist your brother Tyler in buying one third part of the land your brother Wm when at Boston bought two thirds of Sam'l Walker &c .

Goodwill with my love to all my children & inquiring friends and except the same from your L: Father

Wm Pepperrell.

Mary, the eldest daughter of our venerated ancestor, inherited her father's strength and her mother's grace of character. After the death of her first husband, and after having been the mother of seventeen children, her noble bearing and her "many amiable qualities" won the heart of an eminent Boston clergyman, the Rev. Benjamin Colman, first pastor of Brattle Street Church, to whom she was married (August 12, 1745). The following letter to one of her children dates from that period, and shows that she carried her mother-heart and the homespun virtues to her new home:

Boston, Dec. 30th. 1747.

Dear Child:

. I have written twice to you since I have had a line from you. The last letter I had from you was when I received your favor, for which I thank you and your wife. I now send your bucket with two pair of yarn gloves, one pair for yourself and the other for Andrew, and likewise a checked shirt and what was left of ye linen for him. Give my love to your wife and Andrew and accept ye same from your

Affectionate Mother,

MARY COLMAN

P. S.—Mr. Watkins and wife and Dorothy send their love to you and your spouse.

Boast not the titles of your ancestors,
Brave youths! They 're their possessions, none of yours;
When your own virtues equalled have their names,
'Twill be but fair to lean upon their graves.

—*Ben Jonson.*